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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5508
INFO RUCNNAF/NORTH AF NEA AND SOUTH ASIAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 000761

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/PPD, NEA/ELA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: SYRIAN ARTISTS DEMAND RETURN OF ARTWORK ON DISPLAY AT U.S.
AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

1. On October 29, a letter was delivered in person to the American Cultural Center by Syrian artist AbdulJabbar Weis, with whom the mission has previously had a cordial relationship. The letter was written on behalf of five artists who have works on display at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Damascus. They requested the return of their artwork; the Embassy will respond to their letter and comply with the request in the coming week.

2. Text of letter:

October 29, 2008

To the Director of the American Cultural Center

I am graphic artist AbdulJabbar Weis. On behalf of myself and my colleagues graphic artists Muhammad Ghannoum, Itab Hreib, Fadi Yazizi, and Muhannad Orabi, we request the withdrawal of our artwork from the residence of the American Ambassador in Damascus because of the mean aggression against our country by the American helicopters two days ago which killed Syrian civilian victims, including a father and his sons. We are far above displaying our artwork, which reflects our civilization and culture, in the Embassy of a current government that believes in a culture of killing, conquering, and enslaving people.

Your current government has engaged in oppression and conquering, making the name of your country -- America -- synonymous with all those who are enemies of humankind. There is no crime, aggression, or theft of people's resources in this world that your country's government has not committed. Your current government has come to resemble the government of ancient Rome that destroyed civilizations, killed peoples, and placed kings and knights of its enemies in closed playgrounds to become meals for tigers and lions, to satisfy the blood lust of the Roman rulers. After a period of history that witnessed glory and prosperity, the Roman Empire collapsed and was destroyed completely. Nothing remains of its arrogance except drawings on walls and pillars and the remains of arenas and other ruins. People read the stories of the Roman oppression to their children from history books. We are sure all future generations and peoples will write about the oppression and aggression brought about by your current government under the leadership of President George Bush, the son. His actions will never be forgotten.

For the reasons mentioned above, we request the return of our artwork as soon as possible, and before the end of the week.

AbdulJabbar Weis

End text.

CONNELLY